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31  
Burke Family

Dedication

In Devoted Memory

of

Florence William Burke

1880 - 1956



This volume is inscribed and dedicated  
by his wife

Catherine Agnes Crosby Burke





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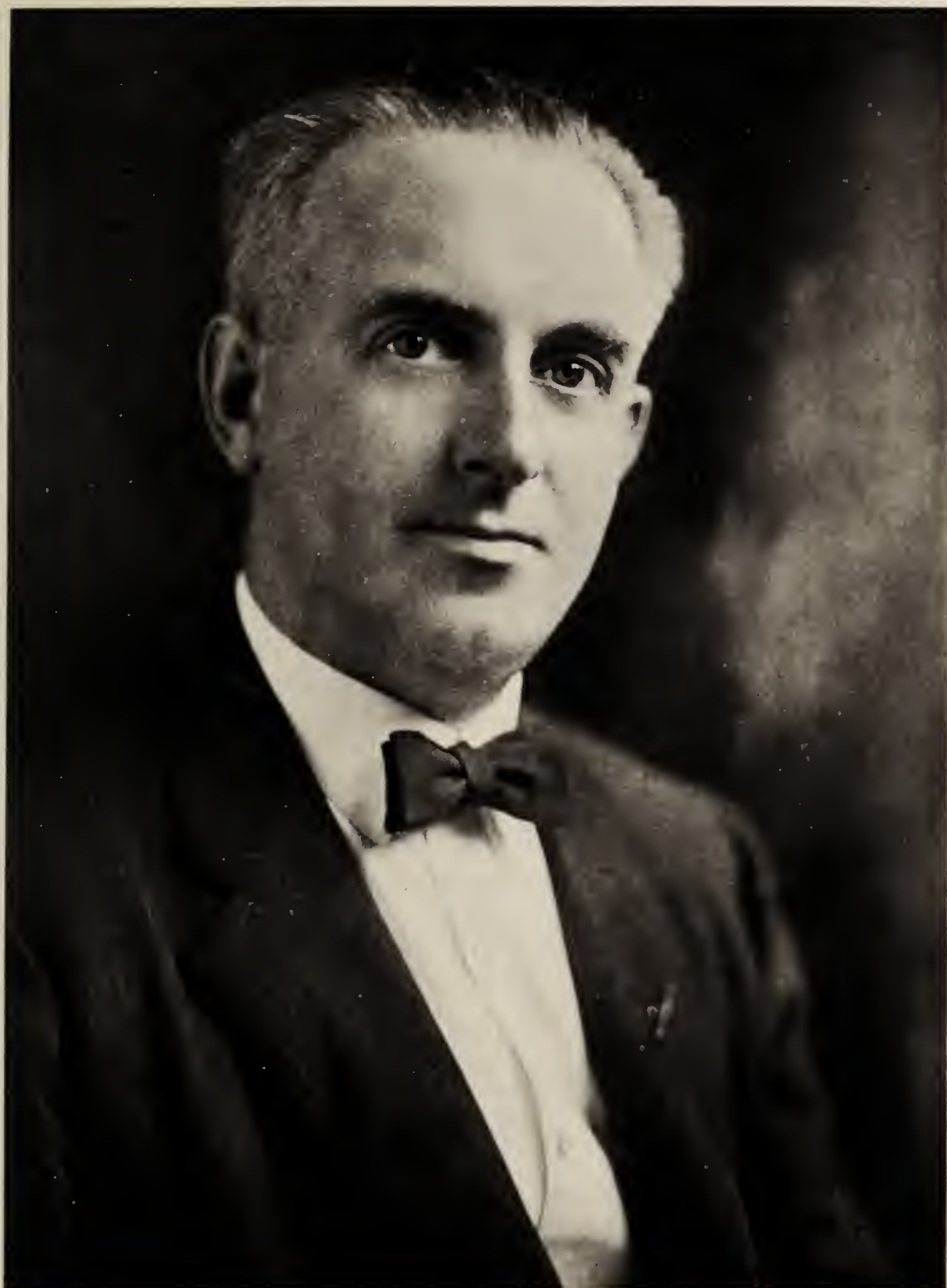
## BURKE

**L**ORENCE BURKE, a son of Michael and Mary (Cotter) Burke, was born in Ireland and came to the United States about 1850. He settled in West Springfield and married Ellen, surname unknown. He enlisted in the Union Army and according to Massachusetts vital statistics was "killed in the trenches before Petersburg June 19, 1864, aged thirty-five years." He was therefore born about 1829 and had been in the United States but a comparatively short time when he entered the service in the Army of his adopted country for which he ultimately gave his life.

MICHAEL FRANCIS BURKE, son of Florence and Ellen Burke, was born about 1854 and died in West Springfield December 13, 1936. He married November 19, 1878 Margaret T. Foley, daughter of William E. and Hanora (Fleming) Foley. She was born in West Springfield in 1856 and died December 30, 1905.

FLORENCE WILLIAM BURKE, son of Michael Francis and Margaret T. (Foley) Burke, was born





Florence W. Purke





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in West Springfield January 7, 1880 and died in Westfield, Massachusetts January 13, 1956. He graduated from the public and High schools of West Springfield and from Brown University with the degrees of A.B. in 1901 and A.M. in 1903. Following his graduation he taught in the Providence High school for about a year and, having decided upon law as a career, entered the Boston University Law School. He passed the bar examination with high marks and was admitted to practice in 1908.

He became associated with the late Richard J. Morrissey in Westfield in 1912 and soon established a reputation as an outstanding member of the bar, a fair and impartial judge and a leader in political and community affairs.

In writing a biography of Judge Burke and describing the exceptional qualities for which he became noted throughout Western Massachusetts nothing could serve the purpose as well as quoting from the tributes paid to his memory by his contemporaries. At a memorial service held at the District Court of



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Western Hampden in Westfield January 17, 1956, Judge Arthur T. Garvey presiding, the following resolutions and moving addresses, were offered.

By Charles F. Ely:

"We gather here this morning because Associate Judge Florence William Burke has passed from our company into the Beyond.

"Born in West Springfield seventy-six years ago, Justice Burke graduated from West Springfield High School, Brown University and the Boston University Law School. He entered the practice of law in Westfield in 1912 in the office of the late Richard J. Morrissey. By nature a general practitioner of the typical New England variety, Justice Burke turned toward bank and probate work as the years moved along. He was eminently successful in all lines. And contributing graciously to such success was Mrs. Burke at their home on Broad Street and talented Laura M. Gagne at conference and in the Registry.

"We like to think of our friend as a splendid example of public servant and the thought is





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proved by the record — first Westfield City Clerk, City Councilman, City Solicitor, Chairman of the Committee that built the Highland School, a Trustee of the Westfield Academy Fund and member of committees without number.

“This seems the appropriate place in which to meet and honor his memory. For it was in this Court Room that Justice Burke gave freely of his time and energy during the past twenty-five years.

“Appointed Special Justice in January 1931, by Governor Joseph B. Ely, he became the Associate Justice after the death of Justice Kellogg in 1932. Whenever called upon and often for extended periods and when he felt obliged to postpone other pressing private duties, Justice Burke presided over the affairs of this Court both civil and otherwise with thoroughness, dignity and a constant sense of public service. Somehow the word ‘criminal’ as distinguished from ‘civil’ seems out of place here. To be sure Justice Burke disposed of many cases distinctly criminal. Yet they occupied a relatively small space on the docket. A multiplicity of affairs — brought



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before this court by the necessity of balancing under the law the community life of a cross-roads city and its surrounding countryside—comprised the greatest volume of his work. Such affairs included automobile traffic, domestic difficulties, errant youth, the apparently never ending dilemma of unwillingness or inability to pay debts and many others. Justice Burke administered impartial justice and gave sound advice in so doing. A Christian gentleman, he was eminently patient and humanely understanding. We who knew him will always honor his memory. Let us strive to follow his example.

“May I suggest that, as a continuing and living remembrance of our colleague and friend, we who are hereby assembled demonstrate our feelings by causing to be placed on the walls of this Court, a portrait of Justice Burke. And to keep him company, let us include portraits of those other grand men who served with him on this bench. I refer to Justice Willis S. Kellogg, Justice Robert Chapin Parker and Associate Justice Henry W. Hallbourg. Such living reminders of an honorable past will inspire those now sitting and add definitely to the fundamental belief in



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our laws — a belief which must animate a Court Room if it truly serves its purpose.

“If it is in order, Your Honor, I move that this resolution be adopted, spread upon the records of this Court and a copy transmitted to Mrs. Burke.”

By Richard C. Morrissey:

“May it please the Court  
Members of the Bar  
And friends of Judge Burke:

“I am very glad of the opportunity to respond on this occasion for several reasons.

“My first reason is because of my long association with Judge Burke. My earliest memories of him are when, as a boy, I visited my father’s office, for when he first came to Westfield he was associated with my father in the general practice of law. His kindnesses to me as a boy have continued through life when his many activities in both civic and fraternal fields brought us in contact with each other. And then when I was appointed Clerk of this Court I found in him a





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friend in Court. It was very evident to me that he fully appreciated the importance of the District Court in the community life and that he felt that this Court was closest to the people, and therefore the one from which the average citizen drew his opinion of the administration of justice. Attaching this importance to this Court he willingly gave up his time and sometimes sacrificed his own business in order that the business of this Court might go on and that the people involved might have a full hearing.

“I would also like to respond as a citizen of the city of Westfield and on behalf of the citizens of this community, which has benefited greatly from the efforts of Judge Burke, both as a fellow citizen and as a public official.

“But most of all I would like to respond as a brother member of the Bar — as a member of the profession of which he was very proud, and to which he devoted his life. I believe that the greatest praise that we could bestow upon him and that the epitaph he would be most proud of is this — that he lived up to the highest ideals of his chosen profession.”



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By Judge Arthur T. Garvey:

“Anything that I might add to what you, Mr. Ely, have so eloquently said, and you, Mr. Morrissey, have also so eloquently said, would be futile, but I would like to say that he, of course, has been an inspiration to the members of our profession, and an inspiration to all in public life that have come in contact with him.

“I could use many high sounding words to express that thought, but he, in his plainness, touched everyone with whom he came in contact, by his honesty, by his own personal conduct which was above reproach, by the manner in which he conducted himself, particularly in this Court, particularly during the very trying period when he assumed the full duties of operating the Court for more than a year, some three years ago.

“I think it would be only fitting and proper that we, as members of the Bar here in Westfield adopt without delay the suggestion of Mr. Ely to do something, and more particularly, to adopt Mr. Ely’s suggestion that he and the other justices who have preceded him, that portraits be placed





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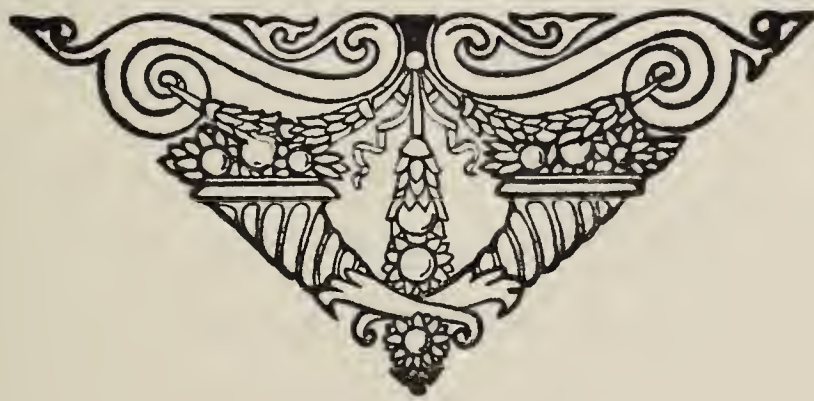
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in this courtroom in their memory. I can only add one thing, that most lawyers have not had the opportunity to come in contact with Judge Burke in reference to his handling of juvenile cases. By nature, they are mostly held in private by requirement of law, and we all know that Judge Burke and Mrs. Burke were not blessed with children, but the understanding that he expressed and which is contained in the records in Mr. Couse's office, which I have had occasion many times to refer to, that you can see that his understanding of the problems of children who came before this Court, problems on the domestic side of life which necessitated husbands and wives appearing in this Court, was beyond the comprehension of the average person, the patience with which he approached them, and the fatherly advice with which he handled the children, juveniles that broke the law. I think that, to me, that typifies in the highest manner the type of man he was, and I can only add one other thing. In talking with Mr. Ely upon learning of the death of Mr. Justice Burke, and I think he well summed it up when he said to me that Judge Burke was a 'good man' ”.



## BURKE

1914 Catherine Agnes Crosby, daughter of Patrick and Mary (Flynn) Crosby. She was born in Brooklyn, New York November 27, 1888. No children.





## B U R K E

Judge Burke was a member of the Board of Trustees of Westfield Academy and on February 15, 1956 the Board adopted the following testimonial, a copy of which was sent to Mrs. Burke:

“On February 14, 1916 — nearly forty years ago — Florence William Burke was elected a member of the Trustees of Westfield Academy. With Harris B. Moulton he shared the honors for length of service on the present board. We lament his passing on January 13, 1956, at the age of seventy-six years.

“As a Trustee of the Westfield Academy, Judge Burke performed faithfully and well the duties to which he was assigned. We shall miss his excellent judgment. It is significant that one year ago, Judge Burke drafted the resolution in memory of William F. Lyman and Judge Robert Chapin Parker.

“Let it be noted—Florence Burke came to the Westfield community a young man of twenty-two and ‘on his own’. By ability, diligence and integrity — by his own efforts — he achieved a most honored position in Westfield affairs. We





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hereby pay honor to a man of the highest character. Florence Burke was a Christian gentleman.”

Judge Burke served for many years as counsel for the Woronoco Savings Bank, a position he resigned in 1953. He was a member of the Massachusetts Bar Association, the Hampden County Bar Association, the Holy Name Society of St. Mary's Church, the Westfield Kiwanis Club, the Whip City Council Knights of Columbus and Division 3 Ancient Order of Hibernians.

His funeral, held on Monday January 16th, was celebrated with a solemn High Mass in St. Mary's Church and largely attended by citizens in all walks of life in Westfield and other communities in Hampden county. A large delegation of members of the Hampden County Bar Association and the justices of Hampden County District Courts also attended. Interment took place in St. Thomas' Cemetery in West Springfield.

Judge Florence William Burke married August 12,

5564













